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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 006417

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/21/2015

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM KPAL EG IS ICRC

SUBJECT: VISIT OF NEA ASSISTANT SECRETARY WELCH: EGYPTIAN
FOREIGN MINISTER ON MDA/THIRD PROTOCOL ISSUE

Classified by Charge Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) During an August 18 telephone conversation with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, NEA Assistant Secretary David Welch pressed for GOE cooperation on moving

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forward with the Magen David Adom (MDA)/Third Protocol issue, particularly assisting Swiss efforts to convene a Diplomatic Conference during the last week of October. It was important for Egypt to help resolve the MDA issue, Welch said, as it was at heart a humanitarian issue.

¶2. (C) Aboul Gheit stated that Egypt was "willing to go along," but that Palestinian Foreign Minister Kidwa was being difficult. The Palestinian Foreign Minister, he said, had accused Egypt of doing some "unfriendly thing" to the Palestinian Authority (Note: He may have been referring to reports that Egypt told Swiss Ambassador Pfirter they would be flexible if Israel publicly declared its intention to maintain MDA activities within 1967 borders. End note). The Palestinians simply do not want the MDA operating within the Occupied Territories, he added. Pushing back, Welch told Aboul Gheit that Kidwa and the Palestinian Authority were taking a short-sighted view. The Palestinians needed "wiser" GOE leadership on this issue. The MDA/Third Protocol issue was a humanitarian issue, Welch repeated; it was wrong to delay progress on resolution over fears of legal precedents and final status issues like borders. These fears are overstated and irrelevant. Welch told Aboul Gheit that Egypt should have a stronger voice than Kidwa's on this issue.

¶3. (U) This message was cleared by A/S Welch.

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JONES